

AT and IT: Together We Can Make It Happen

Presenters:

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Objectives

- Address learning needs for ALL students
- Improve AT/IT collaboration and communication
- Successful ideas for implementation of software
- Ideas for best practice in pairing AT/IT



According to 2006-2007 School District Records

- Ethnic Background
 - 84.5 percent White/Caucasian
 - 7.2 percent Asian/Pacific Islander descent
 - 3.2 percent African/American descent
 - 2.0 percent Hispanic descent
 - 0.2 percent Indian decent
- Median Age of Residents
 - 33.8 years old (a significant portion of the population in the 20 to 44-year-old age group)
- Average Income
 - More than 50 percent of the households in the Blue Valley School District earn in excess of \$75,000 annually



Blue Valley Demographics

- One of the fastest growing school districts in the state and country
- **Enrollment 2006-2007**
20,490 students (grades preK-12)
- **Facilities**
19 elementary schools (grades K - 5)
8 middle schools (grades 6 - 8)
4 high schools (grades 9 - 12)



Blue Valley School District

- **Our Mission:** The Blue Valley School District's mission is unprecedented academic success and unparalleled personal growth for every student.
- **Our Vision:** Together, we will enable each child to become more than he or she ever hoped to be.
- **Our Commitments:** We will make a continuous effort to reallocate resources, adopt innovative programs and critically evaluate current practices to assure academic excellence. We are committed to Professional Learning Communities as the means of continuous school improvement.



IT Basics

- Student to computer ratio: 2.5:1
- 11,000-11,200 total computers
- Own the fiber for our district
- Standardize for compatibility and support



AT Team

- The Assistive Technology Team of Blue Valley School District is comprised of:
2 Speech-Language Pathologists
Occupational Therapist
Music Therapist
Integrated Technology Specialist
- The team provides consultative support, evaluation, training, and follow-up services to students, family members, and staff.



The Past Working Relationship of IT and AT

- Limited interaction between AT and IT
- AT was limited to only one staff member
- Limited scope of practice
- Increase in technology security and standardization issues which made interaction with IT a must



Why did Collaboration Become a Priority?

- District focus on personalized learning
- Time and scheduling of AT staff with IT staff
- Lack of understanding of each departments missions
- Lack of a common language use between departments
- AT - change of focus on student needs
- Ever changing/expanding world of AT and IT
- Emergence of NCLB
- Movement towards Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- District move to OS-XP, stricter security



Initial Steps Towards Collaboration

- AT attending IT meetings to open communications and talk about various needs
- 3 IT staff were communication points for elem/middle/high school. This was to narrow the scope that AT had to contact.
- Executive Directors of IT and Student Services realized a need for something better



Development of IT/AT Position

- Every year began with difficulties that involved AT and IT
- Executive Director of IT recognized that there had to be a better way
- Executive Director of IT experience and exposure to various issues through COSN
- Executive Director of IT and Executive Director of Student Services visited for several months/year
- Both departments fund the salary for the position
- Superintendent supported position also
- Hire on the who first and the what next



Original Job Description vs. Reality

- Original job description was broad
- Why is this relevant?
 - Look at individual needs
 - No cookie cutter description
 - No limiting expectations
 - Allow the job to evolve
 - Flexibility
- A broad description would allow the person to respond to needs out there as they occur rather than set in a certain direction



Current State Between AT and IT

- IT person supports both IT and AT
- Communication
- Collaboration
- No longer US vs Them...it is a WE atmosphere



The Impact of AT/IT

- Blue Valley School District Strategic Plan (Improved services for personalized student learning)
- Customer service
- Better understanding of AT needs
- Better understanding of IT concerns
- Voice from AT to IT that speaks the language
- Increase number of students served
- Move towards UDL
- IT knowing what software may already be available and what runs best on systems
- SLP, MT, OT, IT can focus on their specialized skills



Making It Happen: Improved Learning Opportunities for ALL Students

- Serving a more diverse population of students
 - Personal growth for every student
- Having success with creating an awareness of the UDL concept
- “Assistive technology and universal design improve learning for all types of students – not just those with IEP’s. It allows more access to the curriculum and provides an opportunity for personalized learning.”
Wynne Begun-Director SPED



Making It Happen: Improved Learning Opportunities for ALL Students

- Training and staff awareness:
 - MLP
 - Dashboard
- These have been offered to ALL staff
- Classes are not promoted just as a “sped” class



Real Life Examples of AT/IT: Premier

- History –before AT/IT position
- Addition of AT/IT position- changed the perspective and possibilities
- Implementation
- Process- multiple avenues for training



Another Real Life Examples of AT/IT

- Intellitools Classroom Suite (ICS)
- Clicker
- Boardmaker



Plans for Future Efforts to use Technology to Support Students and Staff

- Increase in software usage that has a strong UDL base
- Offering more training of GEN ED and SPED Staff on UD tools to reach all students
- Cross training with more IT staff to create a better awareness of all IT to AT



Best Practice Advice

- Communication/education between AT and IT....walk in each others shoes patience of the process
- Tell a personal/student story of why you're asking for a specific request
- Ask for and listen to the opinions of the IT department



Best Practice Advice

- Remember: IT does serve **entire** student population; AT serves a **percentage** of the student population
- Work on buy in from top leadership down
- Look carefully for specific staff/personalities involved that would be positive with the collaboration piece
- Administrators and employees have to be flexible with their definition of the IT/AT job description



Side Effects of AT/IT

- Website
- Inventory
- Licensure control
- Executive Director of IT included SPED to benefit from a technology bond
- Different perspectives come together to open up ideas



Vision of CoSN-www.cosn.org

Using Technology to Raise the Achievement of ALL Students - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Using Technology to Raise the Achievement of ALL Students Initiative is a major leadership initiative of the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN).

The goal of this initiative is increased achievement and success for *all* students through the unlimited and effective use of accessible technologies.

It is our core belief that accessible technologies and the close collaboration of assistive technology (AT) and instructional technology (IT) services at the school district level will enhance and facilitate learning for *all* students – those with disabilities and those without disabilities.

How will this be done?

Specifically, the project will create a “new conversation” that will build strong and positive relationships between K-12 school district technology leaders and special education leaders. Currently, communication and interaction between those in charge of special education



Kids with Computer

Stay Updated on Using Technology to Raise the Achievement of ALL Students

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